1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

Approved marriages

No marriages are compulsory in /Kung society. 582

Marriage is allowed with anyone to whom the incest taboo is not extended—with 602 three degrees of approval: preference, permission, and toleration. Once a marriage has taken place, no differentiation in status is made.

The joking relationship is the differentiating factor between the preference and mere permission which the society accords. In preferred marriages the man and woman are name relatives who have had the joking relationship before marriage and have applied to each other the terms */gu/na* and *tũn*. This makes the marriage seem altogether right.

Marriage is permitted between name relatives who apply the terms *tsu* and *//ga* to each other and avoided joking before marriage, provided the incest taboo is not specifically extended to them; and, in the same way, marriage is permitted between name relatives who apply to each other the terms */go*, brother, and */kwi*, sister.

Marriage is tolerated, though rarely experienced, as I mentioned before, with persons to whom the name relationship and the application of kin terms is not extended; i.e. persons of other races, persons of other Bushman language groups, or other /Kung outside the region.

To contract a marriage with someone with whom one must not joke brings in a 182 183 touch of the anomalous which deprives the /Kung of the perfect symmetry and con- 582 sistency which so content them and make them feel secure in rightness. This society 593 tolerates the anomaly, for obviously it must not forbid marriage in too many cate- 602 gories, and adjusts the joking status by giving to man and wife the joking relationship as soon as marriage takes place.

Though neither the sororate nor the levirate is compulsory, marriage is highly 587 approved with the wife of a deceased brother or the husband of a sister. A man is 768 expected to take care of his BrWi should she need his care, even though he is not required to marry her. Marriage with a WiSi or HuBr is also highly approved. Ego has had the joking relationship with these affines.

A marriage arrangement which the /Kung consider especially good is called */oa ku*. 583 This means that an exchange is made between two bands: a boy and girl from one 619 marry a girl and boy from the other. */Oa ku* is not a common practice. Bands as units [584] have no authority in the arrangements of marriages, which is the duty of the parents, as we shall describe presently, and parents do not make the exchange between bands a major factor in their choices. If it happens to come about, however, the people are glad because each band thereby gains a person to replace the person lost and the bonds between the bands are strengthened.

Polygynous marriages

Polygyny is the ideal form of marriage among the /Kung. This is not a society in 595 which prestige and wealth concentrate to give certain categories of men more power 554 or right than others to acquire wives. Headmen and medicine men are held in esteem, 556 but their positions do not in themselves entitle them to have extra wives or give them special dispensations. Wealth tends to be fairly well equalized. Everyone carries [422] his or her own artifacts, the men on carrying-sticks over their shoulders, the women [482]

1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
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ceremony is the avoidance of the parents, which is symbolic of the incest taboo. Any (preferably young) kinswoman who is tall enough and strong enough, whether she herself is married or not, and whether or not she has the joking relation with the bride, may carry the bride; and any may attend her. Only the mother absolutely must not do so. Likewise the groom's father must not attend him. Neither pair of parents go to sit by the wedding fire, for they must not sit near their son's wife or daughter's husband, nor speak to them. Guests of mature years might go and sit by the wedding fire only if they have the joking relationship with both the bride and the groom. Very young guests, such as we saw at /Nai's and /Gunda's fire, may go, whether they joke or not with the bride and groom, because the avoidances are not stringently observed with young children.

Termination of marriage and remarriage

Widows and widowers are not avoided in any special way because of their widowhood.

If her husband dies, a young widow usually returns to her own parents or lives with one of her own siblings, but, if her people are dead, or if it is her preference, she may stay on with her deceased husband's people. It is the duty of her HuBr to hunt for her if she needs his support.

Several possibilities are open to a young widower: rarely he might stay with his deceased wife's parents or siblings; more likely he would return to his own parents or siblings; and, when he marries again, he goes into matrilocal residence with the new bride. In any case, a man is responsible for his wife's parents and young siblings, and, if they depended on him for support, he would take them with him. They would be likely to prefer, however, to live with an adult son, daughter, or sibling of their own if they had any.

Old widowers or widows whose own parents are dead usually live with either a son or daughter, or perhaps with their own sibling—as they wish.

The surviving spouse is free to marry again within the regulations of the extended incest taboo, which applies to all marriages.

Parents would arrange the subsequent marriage of a widowed boy or girl. Adults may make their own arrangements directly. My impression was that persons might be considered fully adult somewhere in their middle or late twenties.

An adult man takes the initiative and asks the woman to marry him. Robert Dyson in the 1951 expedition learned that one way for a man to ask a woman to marry him is to present her with a bow and arrow. If she accepts it she indicates her willingness to consider his suit.

No restriction of time is put upon the remarriage of a widower, but a widow should not remarry until one rainy season has passed. She is then considered 'clean' and may marry again. ≠Toma said, 'The rain washes (*//num*) the death away from the widow.' *//Num* is the gesture of wiping a dish with one finger and then licking the finger. /Ti/kay of Band 9 said that some men wait for a rainy season to pass, but that others would be pleased the husband was dead and, without waiting, say, 'This is my chance.' One interpreter understood that the widow had to take off her kaross and spend a night out, letting the rain fall on her, but ≠Toma said this was not what

1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
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587 589 [783] was meant. That would be very uncomfortable, he said. It would make her shiver and might make her sick. The rainy season's passing is what cleanses the woman. When she is about to go to her new husband she prepares herself by washing in the ordinary way.

Unless a woman is quite old she does not remain long unmarried. One man said, 'Even if a widow is thick and tall, but is a good woman, some man will want her.' Widows may marry as second wives of married men, or they may marry widowers, divorced men, or bachelors. The two young widows and the two divorced women who were unmarried in 1953, had remarried by 1955. Only the very old widows remain unmarried.

There are so few unmarried women that widowers have difficulty in finding wives. The young widowed musician, /Gao, was an example. After his first wife's death he had married the daughter of Gao, the medicine man in Band 1, when she was approximately ten or eleven years old, about the age of his own son, and was patiently waiting for her to grow up. Only one of the old widowers had succeeded in finding a wife by 1957.

736 768 [611] [604] The children of a widowed parent are kept by that parent. A widower may leave his children with a woman relative, but they remain his. Orphaned children go to live with relatives. There is a tendency to feel that the boys belong eventually to the father's side of the family, the girls to the mother's. This concept came to our attention several times, but we did not find it to be a rigid social rule. The relative who is expected to take the children if they are young is the MoSi. But the FaSi might be nearer or more able for one reason or another to take them and might do so. FaBr would be the relative most likely to take half-grown boys, but again MoBr might be the one. Failing these, some other relative would take them. When it came to arranging marriages for orphaned children, informants said that the father's elder brother would have the most authority; a stepfather or stepmother has none.

[584] [597] Adoption does not exist in /Kung society.

586 [422] Divorce may terminate a marriage. The couple may divorce without formality, by mutual consent or by one spouse simply leaving the other. The /Kung word for ending a marriage in this way is */kao joo*. I use the word 'divorce' for convenience, although no legal action takes place. No religious dispensation is involved, no permission or action on the part of the headman or group is required. If parents of a very young couple withheld consent this might influence the couple, but the parents' consent is not a requirement. No property entanglements present difficulties, for there is no dowry or bride-price to be resolved. The only property a /Kung owns personally consists of movables, and these are never owned in common by man and wife. Every artifact down to a single bead belongs to an individual, who takes his property with him in case of divorce.

Divorce does not change people's status in the community in any way. They are free to remarry without restrictions.

Divorce is never obligatory and the grounds are not formalized; the desire of the couple concerned is the determining factor. A condition such as sterility, for example, or a wrongdoing such as adultery, might or might not lead to divorce, depending on how the couple felt about it. Mistreatment or failure to provide would certainly be considered justification for divorce, should they ever occur, but justifica-

/138 cont./

342 bushes and dispense altogether with any construction.

Tree houses are unknown. In any case, they would be possible only in the Kaukau Veld (baobab), since in the Auin region proper the trees are too weak for this purpose.

Each woman has her own windscreen. If she does not have one, she will live under a special bush.

[882] Young girls and young unmarried men sometimes live in special "girls' houses" or "bachelors' houses," separated according to sex.

34 Any kind of special buildings, like meeting houses, storage rooms, and so forth, are unknown.

514 There is little neatness in the vicinity of the huts. Special toilets do not exist. The sole consideration with regard to evacuation is to be hidden from sight. One finds great accumulations of feces away from the main direction of the wind. The practice of burying excrement, common among the Herero, apparently does not occur.

● 768 The pontok (windscreen) is by no means a valuable possession. After the owner's death the entire horde leaves the locality. Hence any question about the inheritance of the hut is an empty one.

342 There is no door, and it would not be easy to attach one, considering the construction of the hut. In this connection it should be mentioned that things are left carelessly lying around in the settlements, even when all the people are absent. In any 685 case a theft would be paid for with the death of the thief. Since [151] the Bushman knows the footprints of every person in the region, the culprit would always be found. In this respect the Bushman operates as reliably as the best police dog.

352 They lie upon grass covered with a few tanned hides. There 513 are no other household furnishings.

/139/ C. Food

372 The doro (fire-making instrument) (Fig. 1) consists of two round sticks of the Burkea africana. Several round, flat hollows

[Text continues on page 10]

!KONG

[41 cont.]

582 girl to marry him. Naturally, these sisters ordinarily do not remember their prerogative until they have failed to get another man whom they desire. Thus the young men are often forced to marry girls who are much older than themselves. If the wife
587 dies, the widower must marry a sister of his wife in case she agrees. [42] If, on the other hand, the man dies, the widow
(589) must stay with the parents-in-law for about a year. It is illegal to marry the wife or the children of a deceased brother. The widow must marry a man from another kin group and move to his vil-
611 lage (1). The boys belong to the father's kin group, the girls to THE MOTHER'S KIN GROUP.

768
842
589
732
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1. "The fate of many a young childless widow is much worse, however. A Bushman communicated the following concerning this matter: 'When a man dies and leaves behind a wife without children, and the brother-in-law refuses to accept his brother's bow and thereby his sister-in-law, she may return to her father's village. But this does not by any means always happen. As a woman who did not bear children she is not highly regarded. Her life has no significance. The men of the village talk about her case and designate one from their midst to destroy the useless life. This man will come to the widow's hut in the evening and will sit down across from her at her fire. He has a bow and arrow with him. The widow knows what is in store for her, but gives no sign. The two talk about trivial matters. After a while the man takes the bow in his hand and shoots an arrow through the heart of the woman sitting across from him. The unfortunate woman dies and is buried as inconspicuously and as quickly as possible. Blood vengeance on the part of the woman's kin group is not to be feared. After all, she did not bear any children.'" (Zastrow and Vedder, op. cit., p. 419.)

distribution of the rainfall upon which it is mainly dependent for its food supply.

The Group Fire.

All fire is the property of the chief. The first fire kindled by him is regarded as essential to the welfare of the community. Every man and woman knows how to use the firesticks, but will not, and may not, light a fire with them in the werft as fire-making is a matter of serious import and the chief is the only person who is able to bring forth from it the magic properties which bring health and happiness and ward off evil and misfortune. The first fire kindled in a new camp is never allowed to die out. As an illustration of this may be cited the practice as it exists among the *Hei-//om* of the Etosha Pan. When among the latter it becomes necessary to move camp, as for example, after a death has taken place, the whole community take up all their goods and chattels and, led by the *geikhoib* (chief), set off in search for a new site to be selected by the latter. Having found a suitable one he places his belongings on the spot on which his own hut is to be erected. His followers, passing on his left, take up suitable places for their huts in like manner. The chief then proceeds to the large tree (*/hеis*) in the centre and kindles a fire underneath it by means of the firedrill (*hei-doros*). Fire from the old encampment or any other source may not be used for this purpose. He next applies *//norab* and *dabas* to the fire by scraping the roots of these plants with his knife over it and, after having done so, lights his pipe with it. This first fire or fire under the tree (*hei-/ais*) is next used by his wife (*gei-khois*) for lighting the fire in front of his hut (*/ou-ais*). The fire is now free for use by the members of the whole group. The men may come and light their pipes from the *hei-/ais* and the women may fetch fire from the */ou-/ais* for kindling their own. Thereafter the latter may proceed with the erection of the huts. Should the *hei-/ais* go out, as sometimes happens during the absence of the *gei-khoib*, it may not be lit except by the latter himself. This he does with fire from the */ou-/ais*. The */ou-/ais* is attended to by the *gei-khois* and under normal circumstances is never allowed to die. A large log is always placed upon it before the chief and his wife will leave camp for any length of time. Should it go out during their absence and the other fires remain burning he, and only he, may kindle it with fire from the *hei-/ais* or from the other huts. In the unlikely event of all the fires having become extinguished during the absence of the inhabitants, no fires may be kindled until the return of the *gei-khoib*. If in such an eventuality he has gone far and is not expected to be home soon, his people will approach a neighbouring *gei-khoib* with whom they are on friendly terms and the latter will come and make a fire under the */hеis* with the *hei-doros*. On the return of their own chief, however, all the fires will be put out and a new */ou-/ais* kindled by him by means of the hei-doros.

8: Fourie D-5 (ca. 1920) 1928
FX10 Bushmen FX10

old woman who assisted at the confinement. Boys take the surname of the mother and girls that of the father. Thus */Uirob Geirob /Geibeb* married a woman */Kao-tamas Gamanis /Harus* and begot two sons, namely *//Otoab ǂGonab /Garub* and *Goyob Gomob /Garub*, and one daughter *Hoaras /Geibes*. Not uncommonly, in the case of boys only, the father's surname with the suffix *mab*, meaning son of, is added to the surname. Hence the names of *//Otoab* become *//Otoab ǂGonab /Garub /Geibemab*. This practice offers a means of identifying relationship and is used for this purpose. A person is as a rule called by the first name only. Nick-names are common and are given to children when quite young. They are usually directed towards some physical peculiarity, for example, *Eibarab*, the lad with the long face and *Amgoseb*, the one with the pointed lips. They are often retained throughout life.

The communities which have not been in contact with civilization are remarkably free from infectious, contagious and other diseases. Except during heavy rainy seasons when malaria becomes unduly prevalent the incidence of disease is very small among them. Sickness is in most instances attributed to the non-observance of customary practices on the part of the affected person, to magical influences exercised by other persons or, when unduly prevalent, to something going wrong with the perpetual fire. Treatment is administered by relatives and friends or in cases of acute or prolonged illness by an elder or doctor who is well versed in magical practice. Herbs of various descriptions are employed both internally and externally through incisions in the skin. Inunction with medicated ointments is also extensively resorted to. Surgical procedures are limited to incisions into the skin. Burial of the dead is carried out almost universally at present. Among the more primitive groups, however, the corpse is left in the hut which is simply pressed down so as to cover it. After a death has taken place the camp is deserted and not occupied again. Old people who are no longer able to help themselves are left in the werft with a supply of food and water. The rest of the group then move off and do not return to it again.

Dances and Games.

Dancing and games of various kinds enter very largely into the lives of the Bushmen. Of these the dance takes the first place among their social recreations. Some of the dances such as the *tsei*, *hāigi-ho*, and *ge-!ni* among the *ǂAo-//ĕin* and *Aikwe* and the */hawa-ǂnab* among the *Hei-//om* would appear to be of a religious nature, being danced only on ceremonial occasions, for example, during the initiation ceremonies. On the other hand dancing is often indulged in at night for pure pleasure, especially in times of plenty. The

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
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properly in these matters, and the kin term they apply guides their behavior with everyone they meet.

The other value is obvious. The !Kung of the whole Nyae Nyae region, in their thirty-six separate bands or groups, are drawn together by a feeling of belonging to an in-group. The familiar names and the use of the kin terms make them expect from each other behavior suitable to kinsmen—sharing food, gift giving, restraint from expressing jealousy or other hostilities, conforming to group opinion, all the things they do that are conducive to peaceful living together. This sense of belonging gives security and comfort to these people in whose language the word *dole*, which means "strange," means also "harmful" and "bad." They call themselves *ju /ðassi*. *Ju* means "people"; */ðassi* connotes something like "true" or "pure" and can be paraphrased as "just ourselves."[7]

INHERITANCE PATTERN • The !Kung have no named, structured patrilineages, but they have a patrilineal emphasis. Inheritance passes from father to eldest son, as does the succession in headmanship.

There is not much property to inherit. Land and the resources of food and water are owned by the band, not privately by individuals. A considerable amount of an individual's personal property is destroyed at the time of his death. This is not done to provide implements for the spirits in the after-life. The !Kung believe that the spirits of the dead have their own heavenly objects and need nothing from earth. It is done because no member of the family wants to use the common objects of the dead, which too vividly remind them of their loss. Only the more rare and important possessions are kept, such as assegais and fine ornaments. These are inherited by the eldest son. Failing a son, the spouse or a daughter or sibling or, failing these, some other close relative who was present would take the things. Whoever took them would be expected to give some of them to other relatives.

MARRIAGE • As I mentioned, the Nyae Nyae !Kung rarely marry outside the region, although !Kung women not infrequently marry Tswana or Herero men in the border settlements.

First marriages are arranged by parents while the children are still young. Either the parents of the boy or those of the girl may first ask for the betrothal. Parents of boys have their eyes on every girl baby and may say to parents of an unborn infant, "If it is a girl, let us have her for our son."

No property settlements enter into the marriage choices or marriage arrangements among the !Kung. Rather, they say about the basis of their choice that they seek an upstanding family for their child to marry into, people who are not lazy and not "far-hearted" but who are dependable and generous and behave with propriety, obeying the social rules and the

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

use the firesticks, but will not, and may not, light a fire with them in the werft, as firemaking is a matter of serious import and the chief is the only person who is able to bring forth from it the magic properties which bring health and happiness and ward off misfortune. The first fire kindled in a new camp is never allowed to die out."

As an illustration he cites[1] the practices existing among the Heikum of the Etosha Pan. Here, when it becomes necessary to move camp, as for example after a death has taken place, the whole community takes up all its goods and chattels, and, led by the *gei-khoib* (chief), sets off in search of a new site to be selected by the latter. Having found a suitable one he places his belongings on the spot on which his own hut is to be erected. His followers, passing on his left, take up suitable places for their huts in like manner. " The chief then proceeds to the large tree (*/heis*) in the centre and kindles a fire underneath it by means of the firedrill (*hei-doros*). Fire from the old encampment or any other source may not be used for this purpose. He next applies *tnorab* and *dabas* to the fire by scraping the roots of these plants with his knife over it and, after having done so, lights his pipe with it. This first fire or fire under the tree (*hei-/ais*) is next used by his wife (*gei-khois*) for lighting the fire in front of his hut (*/ou-/ais*). The fire is now free for use by the members of the whole group. The men may come and light their pipes from the *hei-/ais* and the women may fetch fire from the */ou-/ais* for kindling their own. Thereafter the latter may proceed with the erection of the huts. Should the *hei-/ais* go out, as sometimes happens during the absence of the *gei-khoib*, it may not be lit except by the latter himself. This he does with fire from the */ou-/ais*. The */ou-/ais* is attended to by the *gei-khois* and under normal circumstances is never allowed to die. A large log is always placed upon it before the chief and his wife will leave camp for any length of time. Should it go out during their absence and the other fires remain burning he, and only he, may kindle it with fire from the *hei-/ais* or from the other huts. In the unlikely event of all the fires having become extinguished during the absence of the inhabitants, no fires may be kindled until the return of the *gei-khoib*. If in such an eventuality he has gone far and is not expected to be home soon, his people will approach a neighbouring *gei-khoib* with whom they are on friendly terms and the latter will come and make a fire under the */heis* with the *hei-doros*. On the return of their own chief, however, all the fires will be put out and a new */ou-/ais* kindled

[1] Op. cit., 87–8; cf. *idem*, " Customs of the Hei-//om Bushmen," 52–3.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
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587 "after a certain length of time", and, as among the Naron, there is no levirate. We are not told whose duty it is to look after the children of [736] a widow, but in the case of a widower his children remain with him, and if he marries again are brought up by his new wife.[1]

The survivor of a marriage among the Namib Bushmen is not [768] allowed to remarry until a full season has elapsed since the death of his or her partner. The belief is that if, for example, a woman marries [761] a widower immediately after the death of his first wife, she also will soon die. A widow returns to her own people on the death of her husband, taking with her the unweaned children, who must, however, later return to their father's relatives. If she marries again the new husband must look after the children until they are old enough. There is no mention of the levirate, but the existence of the sororate is implied in Trenk's statement that a widower is expected to marry an eligible sister of his dead wife.[2] This is also noted of the Kung by Lebzelter.[3]

Birth and Infancy

581 A marriage is not regarded as fully consummated until the birth
586 of a child. This is clearly indicated in the fact, already mentioned, that among both the Namib Bushmen and the Heikum barrenness is regarded as one of the main grounds for divorce. It is customary
844 among the Naron and the Heikum for a woman to return to her
591 mother's home for her first confinement, if she has already left with her husband to settle among his people; while among the Kung a newly-married couple remain with the wife's parents until after the birth of a child. It is probable therefore that among all the North-Western tribes a woman's first child is born at the home of her parents; about the other Bushman tribes there is no definite statement on this point.

843 Pregnant women carry on their normal daily occupations until the last moment, collecting veldkos and water, walking as far as the rest do, and so on, although they are apparently treated with some consideration in the way of food. Among the Kung a pregnant woman may not eat sour veldkos, nor anything sweet, nor any fat meat. *No one may pass behind her back, nor may a pot be put on the* fire before she has smeared herself with the soot clinging to it.[4] There

[1] Kaufmann, op. cit., 137.
[2] Op. cit., 14.
[3] Op. cit., 168.
[4] Lebzelter, "Bei den !Kun-Buschleuten," 14.

[423] have seen, individual rights may occasionally be recognized. All
422 portable property is generally owned by individuals, and theft is
[685] severely punished. Huts, which are really of no value, belong to the families occupying them; a man's clothes, weapons, skins, ornaments, utensils, and indeed everything that he makes belong to him alone to do with as he likes, and in the same way anything that a woman makes, e.g. her ornaments, or receives from her husband, e.g. her clothing, is her own property. A man is not free to dispose of the personal property of his wife without her permission. Lebzelter,
867 indeed, goes so far as to assert that among the Kung the sense of private ownership is inculcated even into children. As soon as they are old enough, he says, their parents make for them small bows, digging-sticks, etc., and teach them that they themselves now own these objects and therefore must no longer take those of others.

422 Food, whether vegetable or animal, and water are also private
22 property, and belong to the person who has obtained them. Everyone who has food is, however, expected to give to those who have none. Thus a man who shoots a buck or bird will cut it up, and share with the other people present—but the dividing is done by him, and the skin, sinews, etc., belong to him to be done with as he pleases. In the same way all veldkos is also shared by the members of the band. The result is that practically all food obtained is evenly distributed through the whole camp. But, as we have seen, caches of ostrich egg-shells containing water may be stored away, and these belong to the person who hides them and may not be used without his
[685] permission; while private rights may also be acquired over wild honey or ostrich eggs, and theft in such cases is severely punished.

428 The question of inheritance rarely arises, as generally most of a
[768] man's possessions, especially his weapons and clothing, are buried with him. But during her lifetime a woman will often hand over her
[431] ornaments to her daughter; while among the Auen such of a man's belongings as are not buried with him, e.g. utensils and skins, are inherited by his eldest son. The younger sons and daughters get nothing, nor does the widow, but she keeps her own property. So, too, among the Namib Bushmen, according to Seydel, a man's weapons, clothing, sandals, cooking utensils, and hunting dogs are inherited by the eldest son. At the same time, he adds, the usage
[425] exists that as soon as the eldest son thus becomes sole heir to his late father, all the property he has himself hitherto possessed, such as weapons, clothing, etc., must go to his next brother. Widows and

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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daughters are competely excluded from the inheritance. The eldest son also becomes the head of the family after the death of his father, and must care for the widow and give her food.[1]

Regulation of Public Life

In spite of the loose cohesion of the band, and the facility with which the family groups composing it may wander about separately, the Bushmen are by no means devoid of government and law. Where they are subject to the Bantu or other peoples there is of course not much possibility of an independent political life. In the Okavango marshes, for example, they are in the position of serfs to the BaTawana, by whom they are required to pay an annual tribute of skins, ostrich feathers, and egg-shell beads. The territory occupied by the BaTawana is divided into local districts, each under control of a minor chief (*kxosani*), to whom all the Bushmen in the district have to pay their tribute, and for whom they often have to perform such services as herding his cattle and hunting for him. In the Oschimpoloveld again the Bushmen pay tribute to the OvaKwangari; in the Southern Kalahari they are the serfs and herdsmen of the BaTlaro and other BeChwana tribes among whom they live, and so, too, in the North-East Kalahari, where they are subject to the BaMangwato.[2]

But where the Bushmen are still to some extent independent, each band, as we have seen, is a separate political unit and regulates its own affairs. There is no well-developed system of organized government. In the small family groups of the Cape and Namib Bushmen and of the !O Kung deference is paid to the head of the group, but his authority in general is very limited. The common affairs of the

[1] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 10, 35; Kaufmann, op. cit., 159; Seydel, op. cit., 304; Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 169.

[2] Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, 131–2; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 65–6; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 296 sqq.; D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Languages," 36. In August, 1926, the High Commissioner for S. Africa (H.E. the Earl of Athlone), addressing an assembly of BaMangwato at their chief town Serowe, made the following important declaration with reference to this servitude: "It has been stated that the Masarwa are the slaves of the Mangwato. The Government does not regard them as slaves, but realizes that they are a backward people who serve the Mangwato in return for the food and shelter they receive. I understand that for the most part they are contented and that they do not wish to change. But the Government will not allow any tribe to demand compulsory service from another, and wants to encourage the Masarwa to support themselves. Any Masarwa who wish to leave their masters and live independently of them should understand that they are at liberty to do so, and that if the Mangwato attempt to retain them against their will the Government will not allow it. It is the duty of the Chiefs and Headmen to help these people to stand on their own feet, and I expect the missionaries and the Chief and his Councillors to join the Government in preventing anything in the nature of compulsory service in Bechuanaland" (*Report on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 1926–7, Colonial Reports No. 1379, p. 6). What effect this pronouncement has had upon the status of the Bushmen it is still too early to determine.

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766 others are usually abandoned before they die, and the whole camp wanders in the bush.[1]

888 There is also the well-authenticated fact that old people are sometimes deliberately abandoned. When drought and scarcity force the Bushmen to a long hurried march, some old man or woman may be too feeble to keep up with them. They then make a screen of bushes all round the old person, provide a good supply of firewood and a little food and water if possible, and push on, leaving him behind. Should game and water be found within a couple of days' march, some young fellow is sent hurrying back with supplies. Otherwise they do not come near the place again, knowing that the end must have come and hyenas dealt with the remains. This abandonment of the aged has often been characterized as an inhuman trait in the Bushmen; but when the life of the whole band depends upon rapid movement it is difficult to see how they could act otherwise. Anyone who falls out and dies on such a march will have to [766] [727] go unburied too, and probably the same fate overtakes those killed in war.[2]

114 764 Where burial does take place it follows almost immediately after the death. The descriptions available of the actual funeral ceremonies of the Bushmen are far from being exhaustive, and naturally vary somewhat in detail, but a certain degree of uniformity may be noted. The information relating to the Southern tribes is fragmentary. Skeletons of these Bushmen are found buried both in caves and in graves out in the open, but of the customs associated with burial we have very little record. The fullest description is that given 764 by Arbousset of the Basutoland Bushmen. He states that a dead person first has his head anointed with red powder (*buchu*), mixed with melted fat. The corpse is then rudely perfumed (*grossièrement parfumée*), and laid on its side in an oblong grave, to which all the relatives and friends hasten to make their lamentations. They come even from the neighbouring villages to see and examine the body, which is then taken out of the grave; and everybody redoubles his cries and lamentations. At last they throw into the grave the hut of the dead person, and burn it above him. The grave is then filled in with earth to the level of the ground, but no heap of stones is [768] piled above it. The funeral over, the band leaves the place for a

[1] Kaufmann, op. cit., 158.

[2] Hahn, "Die Buschmänner, 122; Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, 110–11; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 31; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 95; Lebzelter, "Bei den !Kun-Buschleuten," 14.

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year or two, during which the dead person is never spoken of but with veneration and tears.[1]

Several details in this account—the anointing, perfuming, and examination of the body, as well as the burning of the hut—are not met with in the descriptions of other independent observers, who as a rule remark merely that the corpse is buried with all its possessions and the place then deserted.[2] On the other hand, it is certain that many of the Southern Bushmen heaped stones on the graves of their dead. This custom may have originated merely from the desire to protect the body from the ravages of hyenas and other wild animals. It has, however, sometimes been given a religious significance owing to the fact, recorded by several of the older observers, that passing natives would always add a branch or a stone to the heap. It is unfortunately not always possible to gather whether the natives referred to were Bushmen or Hottentots. The latter certainly have various practices and beliefs connected with these grave heaps, of which the usage just mentioned is one of the most common, but there is no fully reliable evidence of anything similar being observed by the Southern Bushmen.

In excavated graves the corpse is sometimes found lying on its left side, with one or two large flat stones placed directly upon it. The interest attaching to these "burial stones" lies in the fact that in a few cases, in association with cave burials along the south coast, they have been found with figures of human beings painted upon them in the typical Bushman style. It would be unprofitable to speculate upon the significance of such stones, as there is no record of any Bushmen having explained them to our authorities; but that they were related to some definite belief can hardly be doubted.[3]

The Namib Bushmen, according to Seydel, as a rule bury a dead person on the morning following his death, and in any case not before the death has been confirmed by the nearest neighbours. The relatives of the dead man and the neighbours accompany the corpse to the grave, uttering or singing a funeral dirge. The grave

[1] *Voyage d'Exploration au . . . Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, 303–4.

[2] Campbell, *Missionary Travels in S. Africa*, 440; Barrow, *Travels in S. Africa*, i, 289; Fritsch, *Drei Jahre in Südafrika*, 242. The account given by Hahn (op. cit., 121) is obviously derived from Arbousset; that in Stow (op. cit., 126–9) from Arbousset, Campbell and Sparrman. The English translation of Arbousset (p. 363) renders "grossièrement parfumée" as "coarsely embalmed", which, as it is repeated in Stow, may have given rise to some misconception. There is nothing in the nature of real embalming among the Bushmen.

[3] Fritsch, loc. cit.; Haughton, in *Trans. R. Soc. S. Afr.*, xiii, 105–6; FitzSimons, *S. Afr. J. Sci.*, xx, 501, 541.

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buchu on the grave and says *tabetu*, good-bye. All then move to another locality and avoid the spot for a couple of years; no one will remain in the vicinity, owing to fear of the ghost. After the funeral there are no further mourning rites.[1] [765] [768]

The burial customs of the Auen appear to be generally similar to those of the Naron.[2] The Kung bind the corpse in the same contracted position, and according to Lebzelter also smear it with ochre. The grave, round, shallow, and narrow, is dug by the men preferably under a termite hill, but if there is none in the vicinity any other suitable spot is chosen. The bottom is covered with branches, over which is spread the grass upon which the dead person last slept. The corpse is buried lying on one side; Vedder states that it faces no special direction, Lebzelter that the back is towards the east. Women are buried with their ornaments, men have their weapons placed on the breast, and children their small bows or digging-sticks. The grave is never again visited by the relatives; if their way leads past it, they go round in a tangent.[3] [768]

In the Eastern Kalahari the Bushmen likewise often bury dead people in the termite ant-hills that are so common all over the country. A hole is excavated in which the body is placed in a contracted position. The grave is then surrounded with a fence of thorn bushes to protect it from the jackals and hyenas. The "tame" Bushmen now also bury their dead in much the same manner as do the heathen BeChwana. A round hole three or four feet deep is excavated, in the side of which a recess is made. The corpse is placed in this recess, either sitting or lying on the left side, with the knees doubled up to the chin. The grave, as a rule, is near to the place where the dead person lived. Sometimes they do not take the trouble to excavate the grave, but use an ant-hill or the cleft of a rock. Here also there is apparently no fixed orientation of the corpse, for when Dornan asked his informants if they placed it with the face to the east, some said they did, others said they did not. When a man is buried, his weapons are placed in the grave with him, together with some meat and occasionally a little water, while a woman is buried with a few ostrich egg-shells, some berries and meat. As a rule the dead person's ornaments are also added, though amongst the tame Bushmen they may be removed. "This, however, is not [771]

[1] Passarge, op. cit., 109–10; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 35.
[2] Kaufmann, op. cit., 158.
[3] Vedder, "Kû-Buschmannsprache," 8; Lebzelter, "!Kuñ-Buschleuten," 14.

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764 often done, as they dislike touching or interfering in any way with a corpse, owing to the fear of bad luck." After the funeral 765 they usually indulge in a funeral feast, then desert the locality, and [768] never mention the dead person's name afterwards. "That they are much affected by death is certain, for they often weep at such times, especially if the deceased be a person of some importance, and bitterly lament his departure from amongst them." Signs of mourning are infrequent. Sometimes they paint their faces with white and black stripes as a sign that they have had a death in their encampment; and Dornan adds that he has heard of their painting the whole body with red and white stripes, but has never himself seen any thus decorated.[1]

Beliefs Concerning the Dead

All the accounts given above are admittedly inadequate. They 114 agree, however, in stating that the dead person is buried in a con- 764 tracted position with all his possessions, and in implying the absence 768 of any elaborate and prolonged funeral ceremony and rites of mourning. No attempt appears to have been made to ascertain what explanation the Bushmen themselves have to offer for burying the dead person with all his possessions, except only in the case of the Kung, of whom we are told by Lebzelter that their reason for placing these objects in the grave is not that the dead person may be able to use them in the future world, but because people do not want to make any further use of objects belonging to a person whom they loved while he was alive.[2]

[769] All the descriptions of the funeral ceremonies of the Bushmen point also to a vague fear of the dead person, expressed most forcibly in the fact that after the funeral the place is abandoned and perhaps never revisited. What belief underlies this fear, and what the Bushmen 775 hold to be the fate of the dead, are not always easy to determine. Stow mentions the belief, reported to him of some Southern Bushmen, that at some undefined spot on the banks of the Orange River there [304] is a place called *'too'ga*, to which after death they will all go; and that to ensure a safe journey there they all cut off the joint of the little finger of one hand. "This they consider is a guarantee that they will be able to arrive there without difficulty, and that upon their arrival they will be feasted with locusts and honey, while those who have neglected this rite will have to travel there upon their

[1] Dornan, *op. cit.*, 144–6. [2] *Op. cit.*, 14.